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LETTER DATED 21 SEPTEMBER 1995 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to present to you the attached letter, dated today, from H.E. Mr. Muhamed Sacirbey, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, addressed to you.

May I ask for your kind assistance in circulating the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ivan Z. MISIC
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Letter dated 21 September 1995 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina addressed to the President of the Security Council

The Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina remains committed to the Contact Group peace plan as well as the Geneva "agreed principles" brokered by the Contact Group between the Foreign Ministers of the Republic of Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We look forward to further progress in this negotiating process. We understand the next formal meeting will take place in New York on 26 September 1995, once again between the three Foreign Ministers.

We continue to exercise the full obligations and responsibilities of a sovereign Member of the United Nations to defend our territorial integrity. None the less, we are seeking political dialogue to substitute for military measures in the efforts to achieve peace consistent with our sovereignty and territorial integrity and the Geneva "agreed principles". Similarly, we cannot accept criticism from some fellow States Members of the United Nations regarding our responsible actions to defend our sovereignty and territorial integrity. No Member State is entitled to greater rights than another with respect to its sovereignty and territorial integrity. In this context, there are no "greater equals" among equals.

None the less, we will not rely upon military action to secure sovereign objectives if we can avoid it. To the point, we do not seek to have our defence forces enter Banja Luka, and wish to undertake all reasonable actions to avoid civilian suffering and new refugees. At the same time, it is necessary to compel a withdrawal of all military and paramilitary forces in the area who, to this day, not only challenge our sovereignty but also continue to engage in further ethnic cleansing, rape and murder and are led by internationally indicted war criminals like Ratko Mladic. We remind the Council, that Arkan's forces just announced their reinforcement in the region and their intention to reject the peace process and the international call for respect of human rights, democratic freedoms and return of refugees to the area.

In view of this complex situation, we again emphasize our intention to continue to pursue the overall peace process, to seek political options to the above concerns and to enter into a cease-fire or even a cessation of hostilities. We offer the following in the context of negotiating a cease-fire and/or a cessation of hostilities for the country as a whole:

1. Committed efforts by both parties in continuing the peace process, including the scheduled 26 September 1995 meeting, with a view to the prompt conclusion of an overall settlement and firm implementation.

2. The completion of the lifting of the siege of Sarajevo, including removal of heavy weapons as demanded by the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); similarly, the opening of roads in and out of Sarajevo and the restoration of utilities.

3. The establishment of a secure land route to Gorazde in order to ease the suffering of the civilian population, which is now experiencing the longest siege of the war.

4. The halting of all military activities in the Banja Luka region in conjunction with the demilitarization of the region (as a way to remove those who had engaged in war crimes and ethnic cleansing, replacing them with an international force to provide security to all and also as means to gain a separation of military forces consistent with a cessation of hostilities). The Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is willing to provide guarantees that its military forces will not enter the demilitarized areas and will facilitate international guarantees to the same effect by encouraging the presence of international observers or forces.

The Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina makes no territorial claims on behalf of the Federation with respect to Banja Luka and is prepared to honour its intentions consistent with the Contact Group and the Geneva "agreed principles".

On 9 September 1995, the meeting in Geneva was convened to adopt the Geneva "agreed principles" and thereby take the most significant and realistic step towards peace. This step took place while the most substantial military measures were directed at the Mladic forces, who were refusing to accede to the demands of the United Nations and NATO to lift the siege of Sarajevo and stop the territorial actions, and, on the other hand, without any evidence to the effect, one member of the Council claimed that peace was threatened by these United Nations and NATO actions on the very day we all met in Geneva to conclude the "agreed principles".

Clearly, this illogical and unexplained internationally launched argumentation was designed for domestic consumption in particular addressing the frustrations of dangerous local ultra nationalists. Bosnia and Herzegovina's future cannot be so carelessly and irresponsibly delegated.

To repeat, we remain committed to the peace process and are prepared to enter into a proper cease-fire and a cessation of hostilities. If the Security Council follows the irresponsible lead of some, to degrade the peace process to a matter of domestic policies, to subject the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina to second class membership in the United Nations and (at the same time that this very question is a subject of great apprehension), to abridge our sovereign responsibilities, then the Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina would be forced to reconsider on what priorities the negotiating process is based upon and to what extent we should continue our participation.

(Signed) Muhamed SACIRBEY